

Main Street Reisterstown Program Minutes

Location/Date: Reter's Crabhouse, Reisterstown - September 10, 2012

Attendees: Amy Mantay, Amy Seitz, Karin Brown, Bill Keeney, Glenn Barnes, Irwin Kramer, Brian Ditto, Mary Molinaro, Kathy Gambrill, Calvin Reter

Amy Seitz said there are currently 26 communities designated in Maryland. Her assistant, Tim Murphy, has moved on to another position and they are interviewing for his replacement. She feels that our community has a lot in place for us to participate in the Maryland Main Street Program. We need to develop and have volunteers for several committees:

Design

Organization

Promotion

Economic Development

Clean – Safe – Green

Descriptions of each of these committees are on the website and help provide a framework and strategy to start. Each committee typically needs 3-4 volunteers, total of 20-25. Committees have their own meetings regularly. Depending on the size of the town, they can be flexible with the structure of the committees. Sponsors are encouraged and needed.

Centerville is the newest group – may be an example of “out of town government” or “wholly non-profit” group --- they have a town manager and can be a good example of having a good balance among all the players to work collaboratively.

Strengthening commercial core attracts new business so everyone benefits.

There are several websites so google Nation Main Street and check out preservationnation.org

Baltimore County has a problem because we don't have the finances in the county and towns aren't incorporated. This doesn't mean it isn't possible, just important for everyone to work together and work hand in hand with the county. Dundalk is a town in Baltimore County that is participating in the MD Main Street program. Amy Mantay says that Andrea van Arsdale has authorized Reisterstown to be in the Main Street Pilot Program and have some planning office employees assist the community for a couple of years. It's important that we start to take advantage of that opportunity.

We will most likely want to get started in a smaller group – try to develop a 2-3 year plan and bring in as many volunteers as possible. Leaders from ROG, RIA, and the Chamber should meet to work together organizing the plan.

The State will expect quarterly reporting of information including numeric and narrative. The person in the role of "Main Street Manager" will be required to attend quarterly meetings which are rotated around the state. The Main Street Manager is responsible for submitting quarterly reports, list events taking place, identify volunteers, list the number of businesses that open or close, and meet with the other managers three times a year. Amy Seitz will often invite speakers who are resources for Main Street communities such as funding.

Amy Mantay's money is really for technical assistance to communities in the Main Street Program. She doesn't have grants like other opportunities in the county and state. She suggested looking online for grants such as community legacy. Discussed possibly conducting a survey to determine the interest of the community to stay on the right track and have a better chance for success. Mary said there was a great response (199 of about 450 emails sent) to the survey about Music on Main Street. Amy Seitz said that Easton and Annapolis have 4 committees and people volunteering for those committees are from all groups. In Easton, non-profits take on committee roles from the Main Street Manager.

Amy Seitz also said that while it is good to have events, be sure to evaluate how successful each event is and how many people attended. It is important to critique events for attendance, return visits and incorporate businesses into the process to bring foot traffic thru businesses. Towns can apply for grants through the program but Main Street members are given priority.

Bill spoke about the 1982 study of what we should be doing started everything and some good things have been done since then. The Pre-Charette workshop days two years ago had about 75 people which was about the same number of interested people back in 1982. A streetscape was done with curbing and sidewalks. Later street lights were added. RIA has used grant money for benches, planters and trash cans and added banners to the lamp posts. However, he feels that we have still never had the county attend to the issue of zoning and building codes, off-street parking, and access to back alleys that have held back redevelopment and feels that needs to be addressed. He feels that we need to see activity and not just talk to get the major property owners along Main Street to come to the meetings and participate.

Glenn mentioned previous meetings in Towson with a few of us to discuss the Pilot Program and address the above items and that the CZMP caused our program to be put on hold. We hope that our continued work now with the county will restart discussions with Andrea VansArsdale in the near future. Glenn asked Amy Seitz how long it would take to get approved if we complete an application now and submit it to them. She said it will be about a year before they accept any new applications in the program. Glenn suggested reviewing and completing the application now to see if we are in agreement and having it ready when applications are accepted in 2013.

Calvin spoke about concerns with promises and then nothing happens and feels we have to move past that.

Kathy reminded everyone that RIA was formed from that pre-Charette two years ago and we need to continue the work.

Mary said that RIA organized because of the need presented by the County to get organized and yet once organized, the County stopped participating at meetings. She is aware that we went through an election cycle, the planning office was reorganized ("community planners" are no more and now they are organized as "neighborhood response teams" for sectors) and then we entered the CZMP cycle which just completed August 28th. However, it is important for the county to participate in all future meetings about Main Street. Amy Mantay said again that Andrea is committed to Reisterstown being part of the Main Street program and providing manpower as needed.

At this point ROG – RIA – Chamber of Commerce – County will meet regularly to develop a plan for Reisterstown to be able to apply to the MD Main Street program which may take a couple of years. Meanwhile everyone will continue with their positive programs in the community. Start with a small group and create a survey to be used in the community to point out needs.

A question was asked whether Catonsville or Pikesville applied yet? Amy said not yet although they attended initial meetings about completing the application process.

Irwin commented about the need to make efforts to keep Main Street vital particularly with the Owings Mills Development. Further discussion pointed out that as Stevenson University grows its population, the students and their parents will be looking for places to eat and shop. We should look to developing a reputation for becoming that place.

Bill said that most of Reisterstown is owned by 7 different families and we need to get them involved. In the past we have had people in the political and government arena acting as our voice when needed. At this point, we don't have anyone specifically taking on that role.